

## What is an Intervention and what are the qualities of an effective intervention?

Some definitions are needed in order for you to better understand why this process is needed and why we are suggesting the modifications and workgroups contained in this document.

### *What is an intervention?*

CDC describes an HIV prevention intervention as a specific activity (or set of related activities) intended to reduce the risk of HIV transmission in a particular target population using a common strategy for delivering the prevention messages. In addition, an agency may implement a *program* which includes a related set of activities serving a subpopulation. For example, the Men's Education Network (MEN) program consists of an individual-level counseling intervention, a social marketing campaign, and outreach conducted in bars.

TDH further defines an intervention as including:

- ✓ A clearly defined audience (target population)
- ✓ An **intent** to deliver the specified intervention to a specific target audience
- ✓ Clearly defined immediate outcomes (direct outcomes expected from the intervention, not long term goals of prevention)
- ✓ A focus on reducing specific risk behaviors

In addition, CDC has documented that most interventions which have demonstrated effectiveness include:

- ✓ opportunities for participants to practice relevant skills
- ✓ a basis in sound behavioral or social science theory

### *What are the qualities of interventions that CDC considers effective?*

- The intervention has a clearly defined audience.
- The intervention has clearly defined intent and immediate outcomes.
- The intervention is based on sound behavioral science theory.
- The intervention is focused on reducing specific risk behaviors.
- The intervention provides opportunities to practice relevant skills.

*Besides the above qualities of effective interventions, there are issues that need to be addressed for effective interventions to be carried out.*

These are:

- A realistic schedule for implementation.
- Staff is sensitive to the cultural needs of the target population.
- They have adequately trained staff in the core elements of the intervention.
- They have clearly defined and taught core elements of the intervention as intended.

- Staff should be prepared to examine and use different modes of delivery for the intervention and should endeavor to personalize the intervention as much as possible for the target audience.

*There are also organizational issues that need to be addressed in order for effective interventions to be carried out.*

These are:

- There is administrative support for the interventions, at all levels.
- There are sufficient resources for the implementation.
- There are sufficient resources to maintain the intervention at quality levels.
- Decision makers are flexible and open to changes in curriculum.
- Interventions should be provided within a broader blanket of coverage that is of interest to the targeted population.

*Effective interventions also respond to issues of primary concern to the consumer.*

These include:

- The intervention meets the priorities and needs defined by the population targeted.
- The intervention is culturally appropriate for the population targeted.
- The intervention is appropriate for the consumers developmental stage.
- The intervention is appropriate for the consumers sexual identity.
- As implemented, the intervention is acceptable to participants.